
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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GOVERNOR'S BUDGET HEARING — OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

Budget Hearing. On December 11, 2017, Governor Kim Reynolds held a budget hearing for the Office of the State Public Defender. State Public Defender Larry Johnson presented the budget request for FY 2019 as summarized in an earlier [Fiscal Update Article](#) and highlighted the following items:

- In FY 2017, State Public Defender employees handled 83,398 charges, while private contract attorneys handled 76,734 cases. Currently, the data management system for State Public Defender employees tracks and keeps record of the total number of charges filed against a client. Private contract attorney workload is measured by claims to the Indigent Defense Fund, which can include multiple charges. The Office of the State Public Defender hopes to modify its data management system in the future in order to produce more comparable statistics between State Public Defender employees and private contract attorneys. The Office is requesting funds from the Technology Reinvestment Fund for this purpose (see the Budget Request section below).
- In June 2017, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in [Diaz v. State of Iowa](#) that counsel must advise noncitizen defenders of all specific statutory immigration consequences associated with a plea or a conviction. In response, the Office has provided four training sessions related to the new requirements since August 2017.
- In FY 2018, the Office has experienced savings from changes to health insurance as well as savings of approximately \$190,000 from changes to the merit increase system.

Budget Request. The Office submitted an FY 2019 request for General Fund appropriations totaling \$59.6 million. This is no change compared to estimated FY 2018. Additionally, the Office is requesting \$88,000 from the Technology Reinvestment Fund for data development of the State Public Defender system.

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